



Criminal Justice Oversight Council

67th Montana Legislature

PO BOX 201706
Helena, MT 59620-1706
(406) 444-3064
FAX (406) 444-3036

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MEMO

TO: Law and Justice Interim Committee
FROM: Milly Allen
DATE: January 7, 2022
RE: Criminal Justice Oversight Council Updates

At its October 27, 2021 meeting, the Criminal Justice Oversight Council heard presentations on diversion programs in the United States, offender housing in Montana, and community corrections in Montana.

Amber Widgery of NCSL presented on primer on diversion programs (deflection, pretrial diversion programs, and problem-solving courts); Robin E. Wosje of the Justice Management Institute presented on prosecutor-led diversion.

The panel on offender housing included representatives of the Department of Corrections, Department of Health and Human Services, the Board of Pardons and Parole, and a local re-entry task force. The Department of Corrections provided information on prerelease centers, rental vouchers, and housing-related transitional assistance. The Department of Health and Human Services presented on recovery residences, also known as sober living homes, in Montana, including information gathered from a DPPHS self-report survey of recovery residences in Montana.

Council members Amy Tenney and Melissa Kelly presented on community corrections in Montana. The presentation included information about individual prerelease facilities, assessment and sanction centers, and treatment facilities, including the facility's evidence-based treatment and programs, resident employment and education, and capacity and costs.

Emerging issues for the Council include community corrections 3.5 treatment and sober living homes. There is a particular interest in ensuring parole-eligible individuals have access to housing and 3.5 treatment if those are conditions of parole. CJOC is balancing these Council-identified concerns with its assigned study of pretrial diversion programs in Montana (HJ 34) and other statutory responsibilities. The next meeting on January 18 will feature a presentation on the Montana Supreme Court's pretrial diversion pilot program as well as Montana's problem-solving drug courts. Legislative staff, including CJOC staff, are meeting with state agencies that use criminal justice data.